

NEW YORK
Herald Tribune

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Thursday, October 21, 1954

A Cabinet Team

The Herald Tribune Forum was fortunate in being able to present at its Tuesday night session a panel of Cabinet members, answering freely and extemporaneously questions put by four distinguished citizens. The questions were searching; the replies candid and precise. In his keynote speech Mr. Allen Dulles, head of the Central Intelligence Agency, had spoken of the young person who, having escaped from behind the Iron Curtain, described her feelings in this way: "Freedom is so exciting." Doubtless there were many members of the audience who were stirred by exactly this thought. Freedom is always exciting when men in places of highest responsibility deal in such a way with issues touching the most vital interests of the people.

This was not the whole Eisenhower team of course; but it was enough to give an idea of how its members are settling down into their tasks and facing their problems. The net result was certainly impressive. These officials have obviously worked together in harmony, have formulated a philosophy to which they can unitedly subscribe, and have hammered out in their separate fields the details of an affirmative, practical approach. Mr. Humphrey, Mr. Brownell, Mr. Mitchell, Mrs. Hobby—these showed themselves as much at home in the intricacies of governmental business as in the broad principles which give life and coherence to their work. It was only regrettable that Mr. Benson was prevented by illness from taking part. He is a man whose full measure the public is increasingly becoming aware of.

To lead is to communicate; and it is noteworthy that these figures were able with so sure a touch to deal with unrehearsed questions from a panel that sought out areas of controversy or seeming difficulty. Television appearances have no doubt helped make public officials more expert than they used to be in the question-and-answer method, so that the formal address is no longer the exclusive approach to the public. Yet practice, however valuable, is not by itself enough. Thorough knowledge, mastery of fundamentals, a disposition to trust the public—these are necessary for the success of such a symposium as the Forum presented. That these qualities should have been shown so effectively—and the texts in today's paper reveal them once again—is a tribute to the whole Eisenhower administration.

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